

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 03907 101537Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----072541 101609Z /44

O 101501Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4851
USDEL SECRETARY JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T BEIRUT 3907

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4
TAGS: PLO, LE
SUBJECT: KHALIDI VIEWS ON PLO'S CURRENT THINKING

1. EMBOFF TOMPKINS MET WITH DIRECTOR INSTITUTE OF PALESTINE STUDIES WALID KHALIDI AUGUST 9. KHALIDI EXPRESSED FOLLOWING VIEWS ON CURRENT STATE OF THINKING WITHIN PALESTINIAN LEADERSHIP.

2. PRESIDENT CARTER'S STATEMENT OF AUGUST 8 REGARDING HOW PLO MIGHT QUALIFY ITSELF FOR DIRECT CONTACTS WITH USG WAS SIGNIFICANT TURNING POINT: IN KHALIDI'S WORDS, "THIS IS WHAT THEY HAVE WAITED FOR." KHALIDI EXPRESSED ASTONISHMENT AND RESPECT FOR BOLDNESS AND SPEED WITH WHICH HE FELT US POLICY WAS MOVING TOWARD CORE ISSUES OF A SETTLEMENT.

3. THE PROBLEM IS: FOR PLO TO ACCEPT 242 AND 338 IMPLIES AN ASYMMETRICAL STATUS ON RECOGNITION QUESTION; PLO WILL HAVE RECOGNIZED ISRAEL WITHOUT ISRAELI RECOGNITION IN RETURN AND WITHOUT ANY ASSURANCE FROM USG THAT EVENTS WOULD PROCEED FROM THAT POINT TOWARDS A SETTLEMENT. PRINCIPAL ASSURANCE NECESSARY IS DEFINITION OF "HOMELAND." PLO FEELS HOMELAND DESCRIPTION IS

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INTERLOCKED WITH 242/338 ACCEPTANCE. PLO WILLING TO INCH FORWARD TOWARD 242/338 ACCEPTANCE PRIVATELY AS IT HEARS PRIVATE ELABORATION FROM USG OF WHAT "HOMELAND" MEANS. PLO STYMIED AS TO HOW TO RECEIVE THESE ASSURANCES. PLO FEELS IT CANNOT MAKE LEAP OF FAITH TO FULL PUBLIC ACCEPTANCE 242/338 UNLESS, IN KHALIDI'S WORDS, "THE 'HOMELAND' BOX ON THE DIAGRAM IS FILLED IN

BY SOME DESCRIPTION."

4. PURSUING "HOMELAND" THEME, KHALIDI SAID THAT ISSUE OF SOVEREIGNTY WAS ONE OF THE MOST COMPLEX PLO HAD TO FACE. KHALIDI SAID HE HAD PERSONALLY RAISED SOVEREIGNTY QUESTION WITH PLO LEADERSHIP AND THAT OUTCOME OF DISCUSSION INDICATED TO HIM CLEAR AWARENESS BY THEM THAT IN SUCH MATTERS AS ABILITY TO MAKE DEFENSE TREATIES WITH OUTSIDE POWERS, TO FORM AN ARMY, EVEN TO MANAGE INTERNAL AND BORDER SECURITY, THE SOVEREIGNTY OF ANY FUTURE PALESTINIAN STATE WOULD NECESSARILY DIFFER FROM SOVEREIGNTY OF NORMAL STATES. IT WOULD BE "A QUALIFIED SOVEREIGNTY." KHALIDI SAID THAT IN RETURN FOR USG ASSURANCES DESCRIBING THE TERM "HOMELAND," PLO COULD RECIPROCATATE BY PRIVATELY SETTING FORTH ITS ACCEPTANCE OF "A QUALIFIED SOVEREIGNTY."

5. REGARDING FEASIBILITY OF NON-PLO PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATION AT ANY MEETING WITH ISRAELIS, KHALIDI SAID THAT SUCH CANDIDATES EXISTED AND THAT PROBLEM OF THEIR BEING TRUSTED BY PLO AS DELEGATES WAS NOT THE MAIN ONE. DRAWING EDGE OF HAND ACROSS HIS THROAT, KHALIDI SAID PROBLEM WAS SIMPLY ONE OF MURDER: WHOEVER BECAME POINT-MAN FOR THE PALESTINIANS WOULD BE MARKED AS THE SYMBOL OF SURRENDER AND COULD EXPECT TO BE "RITUALLY EXECUTED." DEATH OF THAT PERSON WOULD
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NOT ALTER OR REVOKE THE AGREEMENT HE HAD NEGOTIATED; ON THE CONTRARY, THE DEATH WOULD ENABLE ACCEPTANCE. IN SUCH AN ETHOS, REPRESENTATIVES WOULD NOT BE EASY TO FIND. FAR BETTER TO HAVE ARAFAT HIMSELF, WHO EMBODIES THE STRUGGLE AND IS WELL PROTECTED PHYSICALLY, UNDERTAKE THE TASK.

6. KHALIDI STRESSED HIS OWN EFFORTS IN CONTACTS WITH PALESTINIAN LEADERSHIP TO IMPRESS UPON THEM PERISHABLE NATURE OF OPPORTUNITY FACING THEM, AND THEREFORE THE NEED FOR BOLD MOVEMENTS IN RESPONSE TO USG SIGNALS. LEADERSHIP'S DEEP-SEEDED FEAR OF DOUBLE-CROSS, DOUBTS OF USG GOOD FAITH, MADE PROGRESS PAINFULLY SLOW; BUT THEIR ATTITUDES WERE ALREADY PERCEPTIBLY CHANGED FROM ATTITUDES PREVALENT THREE MONTHS AGO.
PARKER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PALESTINIANS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, FOREIGN INTEREST REPRESENTATION, RESOLUTION 242, RESOLUTION 338
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 10-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977BEIRUT03907
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X4
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770287-1303
Format: TEL
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770878/aaaacoif.tel
Line Count: 110
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 91bebf5d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1652430
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: KHALIDI VIEWS ON PLO'S CURRENT THINKING
TAGS: MPOL, PDIP, LE, US, IS, PLO, (KHALIDI, WALID)
To: STATE SECRETARY JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/91bebf5d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009